

ROOSEVELT GRIER OF ROSELLE HIGH SCHOOL

Very few people in America can match all that Roosevelt (Rosey) Grier has packed into his lifetime.

To be more precise, it's almost impossible.

Born into poverty in Georgia, he found initial success after his family (he was one of 12 children) moved to New Jersey and he became a football star at Roselle High School, where he graduated in 1951.

An All-State tackle at the Union County school, he turned that into an All-American career at Penn State, and then became an all-time great player for both the New York Giants and Los Angeles Rams.

He was one of the most visible figures in American culture during the 1960s and '70s, when he became a regular on television and in movies. He was even the host of his own TV show, as well as an author and recording artist.

He was also a central figure at one of the most unfortunate events of the 1960s.

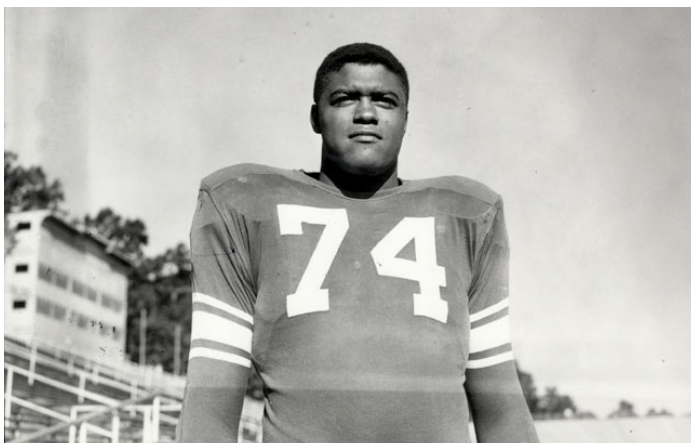


Photo credit: Pennsylvania State University



When Robert F. Kennedy was a presidential candidate in 1968, he helped his campaign as a bodyguard. Grier became a part of history just after midnight on June 5, 1968, when RFK was fatally shot inside a hotel ballroom in Los Angeles after winning the California primary election. When the shots rang out, Grier sprang from his assignment of guarding Kennedy's wife and wrestled the assassin to the ground, while also taking control of his gun.

After Grier's early stardom at Roselle, where he also excelled in basketball and track, he moved on to Penn State, where he became an All-America lineman and was also captain of the track team. He was a IC4A and Penn Relays champion in the shot put and discus.

When the NCAA celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2006, he was named one of its 100 most influential student athletes.

Grier was drafted by the Giants in the third round of 1955 NFL draft. He played with the Giants through 1962. During his time with Big Blue, the team won the NFL championship in 1956, and he was selected All-Pro in 1956, '58 and '59.

The Giants, in conjunction with their 100th anniversary this past season, published a list of

the organization's top 100 all-time players, and Grier placed No. 35.



He closed out his career playing with the Los Angeles Rams from 1962 through '66, where he was part of a famed defensive line known as the Fearsome Foursome.

Playing in New York and California helped fuel his celebrity. In addition to his countless television appearances, he was involved in things like Bob Hope USO tours to entertain troops in Viet Nam, and was also known for his hobbies of needlepoint and crochet.

His career continued to evolve through the 1970s and beyond, as he became a minister, motivational speaker and counselor, in addition to taking on a role in community investment projects.

Grier, who turned 92 last July, was also inducted into the New Jersey Hall of Fame in 2017.

